BRITTON'S REMARKS

ON THE LIFE &c.

OF

SHAKSPEARE

1818.

BRITTON'S REMARKS ON SHAKSPEARE

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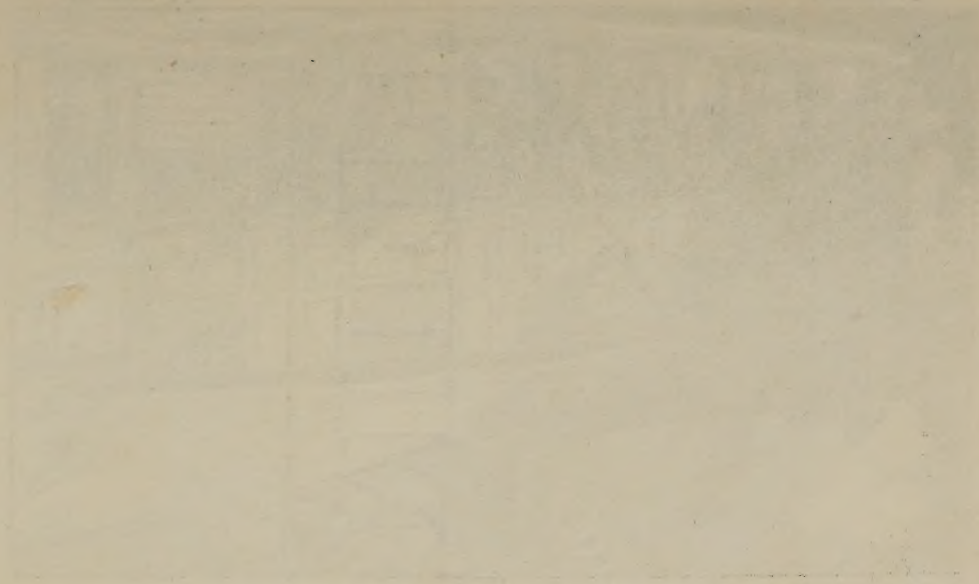
Poetical Talents

June. 4. 1818..




*Alexander, del.* *Thompson, sc.*

View of the House at Stratford-upon-Avon in which Shakspeare was born.



# REMARKS

ON THE

## LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

# William Shakspeare.

WRITTEN

FOR WHITTINGHAM'S EDITION OF HIS PLAYS IN 1814,

REVISED AND MUCH ENLARGED IN MARCH 1818.

WITH A

## LIST OF ESSAYS AND DISSERTATIONS

ON HIS

## Dramatic Writings.

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Our Sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's Child,
Warbles his native wood-notes wild.

*Milton.*

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BY

JOHN BRITTON, F.S.A.

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London:

PRINTED BY CHARLES WHITTINGHAM.

1818.

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# PREFACE.

THE present "Remarks on the Life and Writings of Shakspeare," were first hastily written in 1814, at the request of Mr. Whittingham, to accompany his very beautiful and tastefully embellished cabinet edition of Shakspeare's Plays. The Author did not then, nor does he now, assume any high pretensions to the character of a critic or commentator on our illustrious bard. He has often been delighted and improved by his writings. He has on many occasions felt their pathos, wit, and acumen, and he anticipates reiterated delight and instruction from his superlative works. With these feelings he ventured to pen a few Remarks;—not assuming the title of Memoir, or Life—and these were, in a few days, sent to the printer. Availing himself of a new edition, which was demanded in 1818, he has carefully, though hastily, revised those Remarks, and made a few corrections and additions.

Having thus unpremeditatedly become associated with the greatest genius that ever honoured and illumined the literary world: being thus retained in the retinue of the prince of dramatic poets, the author of these humble, and, he fears, unimportant "Remarks" is extremely anxious to do something on the subject more critical and complete. He is desirous of eliciting some new and original light on the life of the bard of Avon! or of concentrating the scattered rays into such a focal and vivid point, as to afford a more familiar and specific Memoir than has hitherto been given, in a small compass. Towards effecting this object, he deems it necessary to analise, and closely to scrutinise every statement

that has hitherto appeared—to substantiate facts—confirm probabilities—and explode fabulous and foolish stories. If we are precluded from all access to his private studies—to his daily pursuits—to his personal acts and deeds—we shall find abundance of materials to delineate his character at full length—to portray his talents, and to show his attributes as a friend, a father, and an author. Towards effecting such a task, the author urgently solicits the communication of strictures on the following statements—criticisms on his opinions—additions as to literary or personal facts—and any augmentation of the *List of* Commentaries at the end. Every hint of this sort, and on these subjects, will be thankfully received and acknowledged: as it is the author's intention to continue his investigations respecting the life of Shakspeare, with a view of producing, in the course of next winter, a separate small volume, devoted to the subject. This will contain, besides the present Remarks, carefully revised and enlarged, a short review of Shaksperian Commentators, and of his Portraits, a newly engraved print, from the Bust at Stratford—a View of the Monument, several Wood Cuts, &c. The Author thus hopes to produce a volume more commensurate to the interest of the subject, and more in unison with his own feelings and enthusiasm. For some useful communications and suggestions towards the present Essay, the Author gladly and gratefully acknowledges his obligations to James Perry, Esq.: William Harris, Esq.; Edward Dubois, Esq.; F. M. Dovaston, Esq.; James Boaden, Esq.; Joseph Haslewood, Esq.; R. B. Wheler, Esq; John Scott, Esq.; Wm. Hamper, Esq.; J. Taylor, Esq.; Thos. Sharpe, Esq.; Thos. Munden, Esq.; Stephen Jones, Esq.; Octavius Gilchrist, Esq.; and Dr. Sherwin.

*April*, 1818.

## Monumental Bust.



*Blore, del.* *Thompson, sc.*

Among the literary "worthies" of the world, from the days of Homer to Milton, no one has attained equal celebrity with Shakspeare. He now shines as the sun of the intellectual hemisphere, and every other poet and dramatist seems to derive a reflected light from his blazing effulgence, or moves in a less circumscribed orbit. Like Divine Nature, that was at once his guide and goddess, his writings excite admiration and delight, the more intensely they are studied. Prompted by inspiration, and embued with profound knowledge, with the keen and acute "poet's eye" he commanded every region of the terrestrial globe, penetrated the hidden thoughts of man, "gave to airy nothing a local habitation and a name," and assigned to every sentiment "its true form and feature."

"He unites," says Schlegel, "in his existence, the utmost elevation and the utmost depth; and the most foreign and even apparently irreconcileable properties subsist in him peaceably together. The world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures at his feet; in strength a demigod, in profundity of view, a prophet; in all-seeing wisdom, a protecting spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals, as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child." 11—138.

## Monumental Bust

OF

# WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

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" DEAR SON OF MEMORY, GREAT HEIR OF FAME."
*Milton.*



*Blore, del.* *Thompson, sc.*

" APPROACH: BEHOLD THIS MARBLE. KNOW YE NOT
THE FEATURES? HATH NOT OFT HIS FAITHFUL TONGUE,
TOLD YOU THE FASHION OF YOUR OWN ESTATE,
THE SECRETS OF YOUR BOSOM! HERE THEN, ROUND
THIS MONUMENT WITH REVERENCE WHILÆ YE STAND,
SAY TO EACH OTHER—THIS WAS SHAKSPEARE'S FORM;
WHO WALK'D IN EVERY PATH OF HUMAN LIFE,
FELT EVERY PASSION; AND TO ALL MANKIND
DOTH NOW, WILL EVER, THAT EXPERIENCE YIELD
WHICH HIS OWN GENIUS ONLY COULD ACQUIRE."
*Akenside.*

# REMARKS

ON

## THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

# WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

" ——————— Soul of the age,
The applause, delight, the wonder of the stage,
My Shakspeare, arise! ———"

*B. Jonson.*

" ——————— For lofty sense,
Creative fancy, and inspection keen,
Through the deep windings of the human heart,
Is not wild Shakspeare thine and Nature's boast?"

*Thomson.*

" Heaven-born Genius acts from something superior to rules, and antecedent to rules; and has a right of appeal to Nature herself."

*Mrs. Montagu.*

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IT has been frequently and justly remarked that no department in the dignified and almost boundless circle of literature excites so much general interest as *biography*. Every man, who possesses an elevation of mind, evinces an eager and laudable curiosity to ascertain the private habits and characters of those persons who have astonished the world by their exploits, or enlightened it by their genius and wisdom. The genealogy of their families, the events of their childhood, the nature of their education, their personal appearance, their manners, their habits, their friendships, their amusements, and even their foibles, constitute abundant subjects for literary investigation. Nor ought

such inquiries to be rashly stigmatized as puerile, or neglected as unimportant. To judge of an individual through the medium of his public actions only, is to estimate character by an artificial and deceptive light.

Every species of literary composition ought to be devoted to some useful end. The legitimate province of biography is to impart such information as may enlighten the understanding and ameliorate the heart. It is the author's duty to state every illustrative fact connected with the person whose life he portrays; to rouse the ardent mind to emulation, by displaying such qualities as do honour to human nature, and to point out and reprove those failings which detract from the perfection of man. It is also his province to trace the progress of genius from the cradle to the grave, to observe the gradations of its developement, and to mark those peculiarities by which it is distinguished;—those accidents by which it is attracted or repelled, incited or repressed. Were we enabled to compose such a memoir of Shakspeare, we should bequeath to posterity an inestimable treasure;—we should unfold such a history of talent, as would be of the greatest importance to the philosopher and the critic: at the same time that we exhibited a portrait of the most illustrious genius that ever adorned the intellectual world, we should display the most seductive example for the emulation of future authors.

When we reflect on these circumstances, and consider the defective state of biographical knowledge in general, we cannot refrain from expressing the deepest regret that so few illustrious men have thought proper to bequeath to the world memoirs of their own lives. Such legacies, if more frequently bestowed, would be of incalculable benefit to society; and would tend to prevent a vast deal of useless, because for the most part, uncertain and indefinite controversy.

But if the want of faithful biography be a subject of ordinary lament, how greatly is it to be deplored when it regards men endowed with minds of the very highest order. Men who, like the comets of heaven, appear

only at distant periods to attract the gaze of admiring nations, and to shed an unusual glory over the intellectual system.

" Different minds
Incline to different objects; one pursues
The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild;
Another sighs for harmony and grace,
And gentlest beauty. Hence when lightning fires
The arch of heaven, and thunders rock the ground,
When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
And ocean, groaning from his lowest bed,
Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky;
Amid the mighty uproar, while below
The nations tremble, *Shakspeare* looks abroad
From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys
The elemental war." *Akenside.*

That SHAKSPEARE was one of that class of men who, in relation to the species, deserve to be termed prodigies of intelligence, must be acknowledged by all to whom nature and education have given the capacity of understanding and appreciating his works. Not only does he stand unrivalled as a dramatic author, but in every quality of poetical composition he may challenge the most renowned competitor. His invention is certainly not equalled by that of Homer; and though he seldom attains the suavity and graceful majesty of Maro, he far excels that poet in striking imagery and in originality of personification. Even the genius of Milton, with all the aid which the sublimity of his subject afforded, is not more successful in its boldest flights than the wild and creative fancy of " our immortal bard." " If ever any author," says Pope, " deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakspeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature; it proceeded through Ægyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of learning, or some cast of the models of them before him. The poetry of Shakspeare was inspiration indeed; he is not so much an imitator as an instrument of nature: and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him."

Ben. Jonson correctly says,

> "He was not of an age, but *for all time;*
> And all the Muses still were in their prime;
> Where, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
> Our ears, or, like Mercury, to charm."

Whether his aim be to move the passions or to assuage their tumult, to excite pity or rouse indignation; whether he delineates scenes of terror or incidents of pleasure; in fine, whether his object be to excite grief or joy, to awaken in the breast powerful emotions of anguish or mirth, he appears to be a perfect master of his inimitable art. Nor does he excel only in commanding and influencing the passions, for in his reflections on men and manners, and on subjects of religion and philosophy, his sentiments are uniformly appropriate, and are delivered with a force of argument not unworthy of the most profound divine, or the most acute and discriminating moralist. The following lines from his own plays, applied to the character of the King, in Henry the Fifth, are finely applicable to himself.

> "Hear him but reason in *Divinity*,
> And, all-admiring, with an inward wish,
> You would desire he had been made a prelate.
> Hear him debate of *Commonwealth* affairs,
> You'd say—it hath been all in all his study.
> List his discourse of *War*, and you shall hear
> A fearful battle rendered you in music.
> Turn him to any cause of *Policy*,
> The gordian knot of it will he unloose,
> Familiar as his garter: that when he speaks,
> The air, a charter'd libertine, is still,
> And the mute wonder lurketh in mens' ears,
> To steal his sweet and honeyed sentences."

The dramatic writings of Shakspeare are numerous, and are distinguished for the great diversity of characters they include and portray. Some of his plays certainly acquired much popularity during his own life, and were also published by his contemporaries; yet he must have been regardless of posthumous fame, for he neither prepared any of them for the press, nor gave directions concerning their appropriation in his last will.

No author was ever less an egotist than Shakspeare. Equally careless as to the praise or censure of critics and biographers, he either neglected to preserve, or destroyed all records, documents, and memoranda, relating to his own life and writings. Hence the laudable curiosity of the present age is unrewarded by facts, and is held in continued and aggravated suspense, as to the peculiarities of his personal actions and pursuits. His writings have occasioned several volumes of comment; a complete list of which will be given in the sequel of this Essay. Several authors have also written conjectures and dissertations on his life; but all have hitherto failed in their design to develope any essential biographical facts. An extraordinary and astonishing degree of mystery envelopes his name; and it is not without considerable difficulty and doubt that I have drawn up the following narrative, which has been derived from a careful examination of all preceding memoirs, aided by the intelligent communications of the historian of Stratford.

Of Shakspeare's remote and immediate ancestors, scarcely any facts are recorded. Only one solitary document has been found to identify his reputed parents, and to display the condition of his father. This is a "grant, or confirmation of arms," dated 1599, by William Dethick and William Camden, officers of the Heralds' College, empowering John Shakspeare to impale the arms of Arden with his own. After the usual preamble it proceeds:—"Wherefore being solicited, and by credible report informed, that *John Shakspeare, now* of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the counte of Warwicke, *gent.* whose parent, great grandfather, and late antecessor, for his faithefull and approved service* to the late most prudent prince, King Henry VII. of fa-

* Mr. *Malone*, "on examining the two rough draughts of the grant of arms," dated 1596, found in the most perfect one, "whose parents and antecessors were for their valour and faithful services," &c. These words "great grandfather" and "late," he says, are interlineations to the grant of 1599.

mous memorie, was advanced and *rewarded with lands and tenements*, geven to him in those parts of Warwickshere, where they have continewed by some descents in *good reputacion and credit;* and for that the said John Shakspeare, having maryed the daughter and *one of the heyrs* of Robert *Arden* of Wellingcote, in the said countie, and also produced this *his auncient cote of arms heretofore assigned* to him, *whilest* he was her *Majesties officer and baylefe* of that town†: In consideration of the premisses, and for the encouragement of his posteritie, unto whom suche blazon of arms and achevements of inheritance *from theyre said mother*, by the auncyent custome and lawes of arms, maye lawfully descend: We the said Garter and Clarencieulx have assigned," &c. (here follows a description of the arms) "signifying thereby, that it maye and shalbe lawfull for the said John Shakspeare, gent. to bear and use the same shield of arms, single or impaled, as aforesaid, during his natural lyffe; and that it shalbe lawfull for his children, yssue, and posteryte (lawfully begotten) to beare, use, and quarter, and show forth the same, with their dewe differences, in all lawfull warlyke facts, and civile use or exercises," &c. By a MS. note to the above grant, John Shakspeare is further stated to possess "lands and tenements in the county of Warwick," valued at 500*l.* These documents serve to show that he was a man of property and respectability; yet Rowe, and some other biographers, state that he was poor, or "reduced in the latter part of life," and incapable of supporting his son William at school. They found this opinion on an entry in the books of the corporation of Stratford; wherein it appears, that John Shakspeare and Robert Bruce, in 1579, (twenty years before the date of the above grant of arms) were excused paying a weekly fine of 4*d.* which was levied on the other aldermen. In 1586 his name was erased from the list of corporate members, and another substituted in his place, "because he doth not come to the

† This coat of arms appears to have been granted 1569, but the deed is not to be found in the Heralds' College.

Halls." Though these entries are not demonstrative of poverty or disgrace, yet they imply it; and coupled with the statement, that he could not afford to pay for his son's schooling, they tend to render the heraldic grant at variance with these facts, and leave us in doubt and suspence. If unable to pay the usual weekly fine of 4*d.*, and for the son's schooling, we cannot easily account for his obtaining the arms of Arden, in 1599, when his son William was 35 years of age, and when, according to the Stratford registers, he had been married to his third wife about eleven years. Dr. Drake reconciles these doubts, by supposing that the "increasing reputation and affluence of his son William," gave him "comparative competence and respectability" about this time. By the following memorandum in the Heralds' College, and written apparently after the death of the alderman, we are justified in thinking favourably of his circumstances. "As for the *Speare in bend*, it is a patible difference; and the person to whom it was granted hath borne magistracy, and was justice of peace at Stratford-upon-Avon. He married the daughter and heire of Arderne, and *was able to maintain that estate.*"

In the above documents we do not find any allusion to a second wife, or reference to the decease of the heiress of Arden: yet Malone, and Wheler (in his useful "History of Stratford") assert that JOHN *Shakspeare*, the presumed father of the poet, was thrice married: 1st. to ——— Arden, daughter and co-heir of Robert Arden, of Wellingcote, in Warwickshire, before 1558, by whom he had eight children; 2d. to Margery Roberts, Nov. 25, 1584, no issue; and 3dly, to Mary ———, whose maiden name is not specified, in 1588, by whom there were issue, three children. Of these marriages there are no other particulars recorded, than the entries of their names, and that of their issue, in the parish register. Hence some doubts arise, and we have no clue to solve them. Malone, and Dr. Drake, suggest as a probability, that Shakspeare's father might have had a son, named John, who

was baptised before the Stratford register commences, (Sept. 15, 1558) and that some of the baptismal and marriage entries, refer to John, the younger, and not the elder. Admitting this to be probable and true, we have some difficulties removed. The grant of arms has no allusion to a second or third wife, or to the name of the heir. The armorial shield on the Poet's tomb, has only one bearing, that of Arden. Thus, is it not extremely probable, that there were two or more persons named *John* Shakspeare, living at the same time at Stratford, or in its immediate vicinity?

William Shakspeare, the pride of England and of nature, first drew breath in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, on the 23d day of April, 1564. His juvenile habits and early associations are unknown; but it has been inferred from his writings, that he did not receive a very liberal, or as it is commonly called "learned education." Rowe states, that he was "for some time at a free school, where it is probable he acquired what Latin he was master of; but that the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language." On this statement Malone remarks, in a note, "I believe that on leaving school, Shakspeare was placed in the office of some country attorney, or the seneschal of some manor court." The principal reason which this commentator urges for his opinion, is the appearance of "legal technical skill," which is manifested in our poet's plays. But whatever doubts there may be as to his employment on leaving school, it is certain that he early entered into the matrimonial condition, for an entry in the Stratford register mentions, that "Susanna, daughter of William Shakspeare, was baptised May 26, 1583," when he was only nineteen years of age. His wife was *Anne Hathaway*, who is said to have been the "daughter of a substantial yeoman, then residing at the village of Shottery," which is distant about a mile from the town of Stratford. From the inscription (quoted in the

sequel) on her tombstone in the church, she was eight years older than her husband, to whom she brought three children, Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet: the two last were twins, and were baptised February 2, 1584-5.

Concerning the domestic economy of Shakspeare after his marriage, and the means by which he maintained his family, neither tradition nor record furnish the most distant hint. Nor is the date of his leaving Stratford better ascertained; but it is conjectured, with much plausibility, that it did not take place till after the birth of his twin children. As to the cause of his flight to the metropolis, the common story is, that being detected in robbing the deer-park of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, that gentleman, who was one of the county magistrates, prosecuted him with so much rigour, that he found it necessary to escape beyond the boundaries of his influence and jurisdiction. Sir Thomas's spirit of justice, or, as some call it, revenge, is said, on this occasion, to have been stimulated by a ballad written by Shakspeare, of which the following stanza was communicated to Steevens by Mr. Oldys, Norroy King at Arms:

> " A parliemente member, a justice of peace,
> At home a poor scare-crowe, at London an asse;
> If lowsie is Lucie, as some volke miscalle it,
> Then Lucie is lowsie whatever befall it.
> He thinks himself greate,
> Yet an asse in his state
> We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate.
> If Lucie is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
> Sing lowsie Lucie whatever befall it."

This story of Sir Thomas, and the deer, is not very well substantiated, and it comes " in a questionable shape." Without dwelling on it, or crediting another story of Shakspeare being employed to hold horses at the doors of the theatre, we shall rather be inclined to attribute his removal to London to domestic differences, combined with the persuasion of Thomas Green, a relation and townsman, who had been settled in the metropolis, and was noted as " a celebrated comedian." That there

was an estrangement from his wife, may be inferred, from the fact of his having no progeny, by her, after the twins of 1584; from an entry of burial in the register, of "Thomas Greene, *alias* Shakspeare," in 1589-90; and from his neglect of her in his will, wherein her name is interlined, and with a legacy of the "second best bed" only.

"Had not poverty and prosecution," remarks Dr. Drake, "united in driving Shakspeare from his humble occupation in Warwickshire, how many matchless lessons of wisdom and morality, how many unparalleled displays of wit and imagination, of pathos and sublimity, had been buried in oblivion; pictures of emotion, of character, of passion, more profound than philosophy had ever conceived, more impressive than poetry had ever yet embodied; strains, which shall now sound through distant posterity with increasing energy and interest, and which shall powerfully and beneficially continue to influence and to mould both national and individual feeling."

The inducement of Shakspeare to resort to the theatre, and his first employment after his arrival in London, are matters no less clouded with obscurity, than the previous incidents of his life. "No era in the Annals of Literary History," justly observes Dr. Drake, "ever perhaps occurred of greater importance than that which witnessed the entrance of Shakspeare into the metropolis of his native country. The office which he first held in the theatre, according to stage tradition, was that of call-boy, or prompter's attendant, but this statement is almost as questionable as the legendary tale of Pope, of his taking charge of horses. At all events, his continuance in that capacity was of very short duration. Talents like his could not remain long unnoticed or unemployed; but we are inclined to think that he was earlier distinguished as a player than as a dramatic writer. He must have made himself conversant with the machinery of the stage, its language, &c. before he composed his plays."

We now come to that era in the life of Shakspeare,

when he began to write his immortal dramas, and to develope those powers which have rendered him the delight and wonder of successive ages. At the time of his becoming in some degree a public character, we naturally expected to find many anecdotes recorded of his literary history: but by a strange fatality, the same want of authentic record, the same absence of all contemporary anecdote marks every stage of his life. Even the date at which his first play appeared is unknown; and the greatest uncertainty prevails with respect to the chronological order in which the whole series was exhibited, or published. As this subject was justly considered by Malone to be both curious and interesting, he has appropriated to its examination a long and laborious essay. Chalmers, in his "Supplemental Apology," however, endeavours to controvert Malone's dates, and assigns them to other eras. Dr. Drake suggests a new chronological arrangement, and assigns very plausible arguments in support of his opinions. He thinks that the first drama, "either wholly, or in great part," written by him was Pericles, which was produced in 1590. Malone says, the "*First Part of King Henry VI.*" published in 1589, and commonly attributed to Shakspeare, was not written by him, though it might receive some corrections from his pen at a subsequent period, in order to fit it for representation. The "*Second Part of King Henry VI.*" this writer contends, ought therefore to be considered as *Shakspeare's first dramatic piece;* and he thinks that it might be composed about the year 1591, but certainly not earlier than 1590.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

| | Malone. | Chalmers. | Drake. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Pericles | | | 1590 |
| 2. Henry VI. Part I. | | 1595 | 1592 |
| 3. ——— Part II. | 1591 | 1595 | 1592 |
| 4. ——— Part III. | 1591 | 1595 | |
| 5. A Midsummer-Night's Dream | 1592 | 1598 | 1593 |
| 6. Comedy of Errors | 1593 | 1591 | 1591 |
| 7. Taming of the Shrew | 1594 | 1598 | 1594 |
| 8. Love's Labour Lost | 1594 | 1592 | 1591 |
| 9. Two Gentlemen of Verona | 1595 | 1595 | 1595 |
| 10. Romeo and Juliet | 1595 | 1592 | 1593 |
| 11. Hamlet | 1596 | 1597 | 1597 |
| 12. King John | 1596 | 1598 | 1597 |
| 13. King Richard II. | 1597 | 1596 | 1596 |
| 14. King Richard III. | 1597 | 1595 | 1595 |
| 15. King Henry IV. Part I. | 1597 | 1596 | 1596 |
| 16. ——— Part II. | 1598 | 1597 | 1596 |
| 17. Merchant of Venice | 1598 | 1597 | 1597 |
| 18. All's Well that End's Well | 1598 | 1599 | 1598 |
| 19. King Henry V. | 1599 | 1597 | 1599 |
| 20. Much Ado about Nothing | 1600 | 1599 | 1599 |
| 21. As You Like It | 1600 | 1599 | 1600 |
| 22. Merry Wives of Windsor | 1601 | 1596 | 1601 |
| 23. King Henry VIII. | 1601 | 1613 | 1602 |
| 24. Troilus and Cressida | 1602 | 1600 | 1601 |
| 25. Measure for Measure | 1603 | 1604 | 1603 |
| 26. The Winter's Tale | 1604 | 1601 | 1610 |
| 27. King Lear | 1605 | 1605 | 1604 |
| 28. Cymbeline | 1605 | 1606 | 1605 |
| 29. Macbeth | 1606 | 1606 | 1606 |
| 30. Julius Cæsar | 1607 | 1607 | 1607 |
| 31. Antony and Cleopatra | 1608 | 1608 | 1608 |
| 32. Timon of Athens | 1609 | 1601 | 1602 |
| 33. Coriolanus | 1610 | 1609 | 1609 |
| 34. Othello | 1611 | 1614 | 1612 |
| 35. The Tempest | 1612 | 1613 | 1611 |
| 36. Twelfth Night | 1614 | 1613 | 1613 |

Much has been said by different commentators on certain plays, ascribed to Shakspeare, but which are of such a doubtful class, that it is almost impossible to identify their authors; and it is quite impossible to prove them "to be, or not to be" the writings of the bard of Avon. *Titus Andronicus* is generally classed with his plays, but all the critics, except Capell and Schlegel, consider it to be unworthy of Shakspeare. The editors of the first folio edition, however, have included it in that volume; which, combined with other circumstances, implies that they considered the play as his production. George Meres, a contemporary and admirer of Shakspeare, enumerates it among his works in 1598, and Meres was personally acquainted with, and consulted by our Poet. "I cannot conceive," says Schlegel, "that all the critical scepticism in the world would be sufficient to get over such a testimony." The same critic assigns other reasons to show that this play was one of Shakspeare's early productions, between 1584 and 1590. "Can we imagine," he asks, "that such an active head would remain idle for six whole years, without making any attempt to emerge by his talents from an uncongenial situation?" The following pieces appeared during Shakspeare's life-time, and with his name to them. 1. *Locrine;* 2. *Sir John Oldcastle;* 3. *Lord Cromwell;* 4. *The London Prodigal;* 5. *The Puritan;* and 6. *A Yorkshire Tragedy.* Schlegel speaking of these plays, says, "the three last are not only unquestionably Shakspeare's, but, in my opinion, they deserve to be classed among his best and maturest works. Steevens admits, at least in some degree, that they are Shakspeare's, as well as the others, excepting Locrine, but he speaks of all of them with great contempt, "as quite worthless productions." On the same subject let us hear the decided language of Dr. Drake (ii. 536.) "Of these wretched dramas, it has been now positively proved, through the medium of the Henslowe papers, that the name of Shakspeare, which is printed at length in the title.pages of *Sir John Oldcastle,* 1600; and *The London Prodigal,* 1605; was affixed to those pieces by

a knavish bookseller, without any foundation *." Eight other dramatic pieces have been attributed to Shakspeare: all of which are condemned by Dr. Drake, who says, he does not believe that "twenty lines can be found of Shakspeare, in *Henry VI.* or *Titus Andronicus*," and not so many in the six above enumerated: therefore, says he, "it would be utter abuse of time to enter into any critical discussion of the merits or defects of those pieces." The same may be said of other volumes, consisting of poems, &c. which certain impudent publishers have foisted on the world, even with the name of Shakspeare in the title-page. I have seen a rare little volume, called *Cupid's Cabinet Unlocked*, in the possession of James Perry, Esq. with his name; but it has no other characteristic of the great author, whose name is thus prostituted.

Shakspeare, besides his plays, wrote several *Poetical pieces, viz.* "Venus and Adonis," printed in 1593; "The Rape of Lucrece," printed in 1594; "The Passionate Pilgrim," printed in 1599; "A Lover's Complaint," not dated; and a Collection of Sonnets, printed in 1609. The first and second of these productions were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, who is stated, on the authority of Sir William D'Avenant, to have given the poet a thousand pounds. If this anecdote be really true, it evinces a spirit of liberality and well-directed munificence, which entitles his lordship to the highest rank among the patrons of genius. It shows also that Shakspeare's merits were appreciated by some eminent characters, even in his life-time; a truth which is confirmed by the rapid sale of his poems, and by the attentions which he received from Queen Elizabeth, and her successor, King James. The former, says Rowe, had several of his plays acted before her, and "without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour." According to the same writer, it was at her desire he composed the Merry Wives of Windsor. King James also was present at the representation of many of his

* See Reed's Shakspeare, vol. iii. p. 390, &c.

pieces, and is stated by Lintot to have written to him "an amicable letter" with his own hand, and as Dr. Farmer conjectures, in return for the compliment paid him in Macbeth. This letter is said to have remained long in the possession of Sir William D'Avenant, who, according to some persons, was an illegitimate son of the poet.

Shakspeare, as already hinted, was an Actor as well as a writer of plays, and seems to have taken a share in the representation of many of his own productions. As late as the year 1603, only thirteen years before his death, his name appears among the actors of Ben. Jonson's play of Sejanus. Thus it is evident that he continued to perform many years: but of his merits as a player, we find no positive data to found an accurate estimate, and hence there is much diversity of opinion among his commentators. Performers and dramatic authors were not then so closely watched, or so fastidiously criticised as in the present age; indeed diurnal reviewers were then unknown. From some satirical passages in the writings of his contemporaries, he appears not to have been a favourite actor with the public. His instructions on the subject of acting, however, in Hamlet, are so peculiarly excellent, that we are not a little inclined to suspect, if he was unpopular, that it arose rather from the want of taste in his audience, than from any deficiency of theatrical powers in himself. The "science of acting" was then only in its infancy; and as he that "strutted and bellowed" most, was probably esteemed the best player, Shakspeare's gentleness would be considered tameness, and his observance of nature ignorance of his art. It has been traditionally said, and with every degree of probability, that our poet was a *good performer;* and that the notice he obtained by the personification of the Ghost in his own play of Hamlet, shows, he not only knew how to "suit the action to the word, and word to the action," but could execute this advice. The whole of Hamlet's directions to the players, are so full of "pith and moment," so apposite, copious, and

replete with sound sense, that one cannot doubt the ample qualifications of its author to feel, understand, and indeed accomplish parts of those instructions. Aubrey's testimony is, that Shakspeare "*did act exceedingly well.*"

At what period our poet gave up all personal connexion with the theatre has not been discovered; but it is probable that he retired from it at least three years before his death. Rowe indeed states, that "the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense would wish theirs may be; in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends." During his dramatic career, he acquired a share in the property of the Globe Theatre, and was joint manager of the same; his name is mentioned in the licence granted by King James, in 1603, for the exhibition of plays in that house, and in any part of the kingdom. This share he probably sold when he finally retired to Stratford, as it is neither alluded to in his will, nor does his name occur in the accounts of the theatre for 1613.

Shakspeare, like most men of pre-eminent talents, is said to have been much assailed by the attacks of envious rivals; yet we are assured that diffidence and good-nature were the peculiar characteristics of his personal deportment. Among those who are stated to have treated him with hostility, was the celebrated Ben. Jonson; but Dr. Farmer thinks, that though Jonson was arrogant of his scholarship, and publicly professed a rivalship of Shakspeare, he was in private his friend and associate. *Pope*, in his preface says, that Jonson "loved" Shakspeare, "as well as honoured his memory; celebrates the honesty, openness, and frankness of his temper; and only distinguishes, as he reasonably ought, between the real merit of the author, and the silly and derogatory applauses of the players." Mr. *Gilchrist*, whose dramatic criticisms are generally profound and acute, has published a pamphlet to prove that Jonson was never a harsh, or an envious rival of Shakspeare; and that the popular opinion on this subject is founded in error. The following story respecting these two great

dramatists is related by Rowe, and has been generally credited by subsequent biographers. "Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turned it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natured answer, that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakspeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it, as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the public."

The opposition or rivalship of Shakspeare and Jonson produced, as might naturally be expected, much contention concerning the relative merits of each between their respective friends and admirers; and it is not a little remarkable, that Jonson seems to have maintained a higher place in the estimation of the public in general than our poet, for more than a century after the death of the latter. Within that period Jonson's works are said to have passed through several editions, and to have been read with avidity, while Shakspeare's were comparatively neglected till the time of Rowe. This circumstance is in a great measure to be accounted for on the principle that classical literature and collegiate learning were regarded in those days as the chief criterions of merit. Accordingly Jonson's charge against Shakspeare was the want of that species of knowledge; and from his own proficiency in it, he probably arrogated a superiority. That all classical scholars, however, did not sanction Jonson's pretensions is certain; for among the greatest admirers of Shakspeare, was one of the most learned men of his age, the ever-memorable Hales. On one occasion the latter, after listening in silence to a warm debate between Sir John Suckling and Jonson, is reported to have interposed by observing, "That if Shakspeare had not read the ancients, he had likewise not stolen any thing from them; and that if he (Jonson) would

produce any one topic finely treated by any one of them, he would undertake to show something upon the same subject, at least as well written by Shakspeare." A trial, it is added, being in consequence agreed to, judges were appointed to decide the dispute, who unanimously voted in favour of the English poet, after a candid examination and comparison of the passages produced by the contending parties.

"Shakspeare," observes Rowe, "had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion, and in that to his wish;" but the biographer does not even hint at the amount of the poet's income. Malone, however, judging from the bequests in Shakspeare's Will, thinks it might be about 200*l.* per year; which at the age when he lived, was equal to 800*l.* a year at the present time. Subsequent to his retirement from the stage, he resided in a house at Stratford which he had purchased, according to Wheler, in 1597, from the family of Underhill, and which, previous to that time had been called *the Great House*, probably from its having been the best in the town, when it was originally erected by Sir Hugh Clopton, in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The poet appears to have made considerable alterations in this house, and changed its name to *New-place*. Here he seems to have resided a few years in retirement, but not without devoting some time to dramatic composition; for Malone asserts, that the play of Twelfth Night was written after his final residence at Stratford. In this house he died, on Tuesday, April 23, 1616, being the anniversary of his 52d year*; in two days afterwards his remains were interred within the chancel of the parish church; where a flat stone and a mural monument were afterwards placed to point out the spot, and commemorate his likeness, name, and memory.

Such is the substance of the scanty notices respecting the life of Shakspeare, which we are enabled to collect from Rowe, and from the various commentators on

* It is a remarkable coincidence that Cervantes, the most original genius on the Continent, died on the same day.

his work, to Dr. Drake inclusive. To these we shall add, the following anecdotes, in his own words, as recorded by *John Aubrey* in his MS. collections in the Ashmolean Museum, at Oxford. It is worthy of note that Aubrey resided at Oxford for several years after 1642; that he was intimate with Sir William D'Avenant, Hobbes, Milton, Ray, &c.; that he made it a practice to collect and write down anecdotes of his friends and of public characters; that D'Avenant knew Shakspeare; that there was frequent communication between Stratford and Oxford; and that, although there are some variations in the accounts of Rowe and Aubrey, the latter is most entitled to credit. He states that

"Mr. William Shakespear was borne at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick: his father was a *butcher*, and I have been told heretofore by *some of the neighbours*, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a calfe he would doe it in a high style and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this towne, that was helde not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance and coetanean, but dyed young. This Wm. being inclined naturally to poetry and acting came to London, *I guesse* about 18, and was an actor at one of the playhouses, and *did act exceedingly well*. Now B. Jonson never was a good actor, but an excellent instructor. He began early to make essayes at dramatique poetry, which at that time was very lowe, and *his playes tooke well*. He was a handsome well shap't man, very good company, and of a very readie and pleasant smooth witt: the humour of ----, the constable in a Midsummer Night's Dreame, he happened to take at Grendon, in Bucks, which is the roade from London to Stratford; and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxon. Mr. Jos. Howe is of that parish, and knew him. Ben. Jonson and he did gather humours of men dayly, wherever they came. One time, as he was at the tavern, at Stratford-upon-Avon, one Combes, an old rich usurer, was to be buryed, he makes there this extemporary epitaph:

"Ten in the hundred the devill allowes,
But Combes will have twelve he sweares and vowes:
If any one askes who lies in this tombe?
'Hoh,' quoth the devill, 'tis my John o' Combe.'

"He was wont to goe to his native country once a yeare. I think I have been told, that he left 2 or 300 lib. per annum, there and therabout, to a sister. I have heard Sir Wm. D'Avenant, and Mr. Thomas Shadwell (who is counted the best comœdian we have now), say that he had a most prodigious witt; and did admire his naturall parts beyond all other dramaticall writers. He was wont to say that he never blotted out a line in his life: sayd Ben Jonson, 'I wish he had blotted out a thousand.' His comœdies will remain witt as long as the English tongue is understood, for that he handles *mores hominum:* now our present writers reflect so much upon particular persons and coxcombeities that twenty years hence they will not be understood.

"Though, as Ben Jonson sayes of him, that he had but little Latine and lesse Greek, he understood Latine pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." See Letters from the Bodleian Library, &c. Vol. iii. p. 307.

The above account, though apparently sanctioned by good authority, and probably written about thirty years after Shakspeare's death, is treated by some of his biographers as wholly incredible. Of this opinion is Malone, in his notes upon the Life of our poet by Rowe; but in his own "Historical Account of the English Stage," he seems at a loss whether to argue for or against the probability of Aubrey's statement. The same wavering and inconsistency, on dubious points, are visible in other parts of the writings of that commentator. Thus in one place he is positive that Shakspeare's father was thrice married; and in another, he is equally confident that he had not more than two wives. In his chronology, he states 1591 to be the year in which our author commenced writer for the stage, and argues throughout the whole essay on that presumption; but in his remarks relative to the passage above quoted, he

says, "We have no proof that he did not woo the dramatic muse even so early as 1587 or 1588; and therefore till such proof shall be produced, Mr. Aubrey's assertion, founded apparently on the information of those who lived very near the time, is entitled to some weight."

The *Monument* erected to his memory is constructed partly of marble and partly of stone, and consists of a half-length bust of the deceased, with a cushion before him, placed under an ornamental canopy, between two columns of the corinthian order, supporting an entablature. Attached to the latter are the Arden arms and crest, sculptured in relief. Beneath the bust are the following lines: probably by B. Jonson.

Judicio Pylivm, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, popvlvs mœret, Olympvs habet.

Stay, passenger, why goest thou by so fast?
Read, if thov canst, whom enviovs death hath plast
Within this monvment, Shakspeare, with whome
Qvick natvre dide; whose name doth deck ys tombe
Far more than coste; sieth all yt he hath writt
Leaves living art bvt page to serve his witt.
Obiit Ano. Doi. 1616, ætatis 53, die 23 Ap.

On a flat stone which covers the poet's grave is this curious but vulgar inscription:

Good frend for Jesvs' sake forbeare
To digg the dvst encloased heare;
Blese be ye. man yt spares thes stones,
And cvrst be he yt. moves my bones.

The common tradition is, that the last four lines were written by Shakspeare himself; but this notion has perhaps originated solely from the use of the word "my," in the last line. The imprecation, says Malone, was probably suggested by an apprehension "that our author's remains might share the same fate with those of the rest of his countrymen, and be added to the immense pile of human bones deposited in the charnel-house at Stratford." It is not very likely that Shakspeare ever wrote these silly lines.

Mrs. Shakspeare, who survived her husband eight years, was buried between his grave and the north wall

of the chancel, under a stone inlaid with brass, and inscribed thus:

"Heere lyeth interred the bodye of Anne, wife of Mr. William Shakespeare, who depted. this life the 6th day of Avgvst, 1623, being of the age of 67 yeares.

Vbera, tv Mater, tv lac vitamq. dedisti,
Væ mihi; pro tanto mvnere saxa dabo!
Qvam Mallem, amoveat lapidem, bonvs angel'ore'
Exeat vt Christi Corpvs, imago tva,
Sed nil vota valent, venias cito Christe resvrget,
Clavsa licet tvmvlo mater, et astra petet."

The family of Shakspeare, as already mentioned, consisted only of one son and two daughters. The son died in 1592; but both the daughters survived their father. The eldest, Susanna, married *Dr. John Hall*, a physician of Stratford, who is said to have obtained much reputation and practice. She brought her husband an only child, Elizabeth, who was married, first, to Thomas Nashe, Esq. and afterwards to Sir John Barnard of Abingdon, in Northamptonshire; but had no issue by either of them. Judith, Shakspeare's second daughter, married Thomas Quiney, a vintner of Stratford, by whom she had three children; but as none of them reached their twentieth year, they left no posterity. Hence our poet's last lineal descendant was Lady Barnard, who was buried at Abingdon, Feb. 17, 1669-70. Dr. Hall, her father, died Nov. 25, 1635, and her mother, July 11, 1649: and both were interred in Stratford church under flat stones, bearing inscriptions to their respective memories.

Shakspeare, by his *Will*, still preserved in the office of the Prerogative Court, London, and bearing date the 25th day of March, 1616, made the following bequests:

To his daughter *Judith* he gave 150*l.* of lawful English money; one hundred to be paid in discharge of her marriage portion, within one year after his decease, and the remaining fifty upon her giving up, in favour of her elder sister, Susanna Hall, all her right in a copyhold tenement and appurtenances, parcel of the manor of Rowington. To the said Judith he also

bequeathed 150*l.* more, if she or any of her issue were living three years after the date of his will; but in the contrary event, then he directed that 100*l.* of the sum should be paid to his niece, Elizabeth Hall, and the proceeds of the fifty to his sister, Joan, or Jone Hart, for life, with residue to her chilren. He further gave to the said Judith "his broad silver gilt bowl."

To his sister Joan, besides the contingent bequest above mentioned, he gave twenty pounds and all his wearing apparel; also the house in Stratford, in which she was to reside for her natural life, under the yearly rent of twelve-pence.

To her three sons, William Hart, ---- Hart, and Michael Hart, he gave five pounds a-piece; to be paid within one year after his decease.

To his grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall, he bequeathed all his plate, the silver bowl above excepted.

To the poor of Stratford he bequeathed ten pounds; to Mr. Thomas Combe, his sword; to Thomas Russel five pounds; to Francis Collins, esq. thirteen pounds six shillings and eight-pence; to Hamlet (Hamnet) Sadler, twenty-six shillings and eight-pence to buy a ring; and a like sum, for the same purpose, to William Reynolds, gent. Anthony Nash, gent. John Hemynge, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell, his "fellows:" also twenty shillings in gold to his godson, William Walker.

To his daughter, Susanna Hall, he bequeathed Newplace, with its appurtenances; two messuages or tenements, with their appurtenances, situated in Henley-street (represented in the accompanying print); also all his "barns, stables, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever, situate, lying, and being, or to be had, received, perceived, or taken, within the towns, hamlets, villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford-upon-Avon, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe, or in any of them, in the said county of Warwick; and also all that messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, wherein one John Robinson dwelleth, situated, lying, and being in the Blackfriars, London, near the Wardrobe; and all my other lands,

tenements, and hereditaments whatsoever: to have and to hold all and singular the said premises, with their appurtenances, unto the said Susanna Hall, for and during the term of her natural life; and after her decease, to the first son of her body lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said first son, lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to the second son of her body lawfully issuing, and to the heirs males of the body of the said second son lawfully issuing;" and so forth, as to the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh sons of her body and their male heirs: "and for default of such issue, the said premises to be and remain to my said niece Hall, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to my daughter Judith, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to the right heirs of me the said William Shakspeare."

To the said Susanna Hall and her husband, whom he appointed executors of his will, under the direction of Francis Collins and Thomas Russel, esqrs. he further bequeathed all the rest of his "goods, chattels, leases, plate, jewels, and household stuff whatsoever," after the payment of his debts, legacies, and funeral expenses; with the exception of his "second best bed with the furniture," which constituted the only bequest he made to his wife, and that by insertion after the will was written out.

The houses mentioned above, as being situated in Henley-street, are those represented in the annexed wood cut. According to tradition, they originally constituted a single mansion, the residence of our poet's father, and the immediate scene of his own birth. This view was sketched by Mr. W. Alexander, in June 1807; but the figures representing the Jubilee procession, were inserted from a drawing by S. Ireland. Mr. Waldron, who was present at the Jubilee, informs me, that in consequence of incessant rains, the prepared procession was not employed.

*New Place*, the residence of Shakspeare, was occupied after his death by Mr. and Mrs. Hall, the latter of

whom survived her husband several years. During her residence in it in her widowhood, it was honoured by the temporary abode of Henrietta Maria, queen to Charles the First. On the decease of Mrs. Hall, it became the property of her daughter, Lady Barnard, and was sold by her surviving executor, to Edward Nash, Esq. who bequeathed it to his daughter Mary, wife of Sir Reginald Forster. By that gentleman it was sold to Sir John Clopton, a descendant from the original proprietor and founder. Here, under a mulberry tree planted by Shakspeare's own hand, Garrick, Macklin, and Delany, were hospitably entertained, when they visited Stratford, in 1742, by Sir Hugh Clopton, barrister at law, who repaired and beautified the house, instead of (as Malone asserts) pulling it down, and building another on its site. On his death it was sold, in 1752, by his son-in-law, Henry Talbot, Esq. to the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who cut down the mulberry tree to save himself the trouble of showing it to visitors.

Many *Portraits* have been engraved, and published as likenesses of our bard; but it is a lamentable and extraordinary fact, that there is no authority attached to one of them. The pedigree of each is defective, and even that in the title of the first folio edition of the author's works, and so *poetically* extolled by Jonson, is so badly drawn and executed, that it cannot be a good likeness. — Not so, the *monumental bust* in Stratford church; for this appeals to our eyes and understandings, with all the force of truth. It is indeed the most authentic and probable portrait of the poet. It was executed soon after his decease, and according to the credible tradition of the town, was copied from a cast after nature. We also know that Leonard Digges mentions the "Stratford monument," in his lines prefixed to the folio edition of Shakspeare's plays of 1623; whence it is certain that the bust was executed within seven years of the poet's death. The common practice in that age of executing monumental busts of illustrious and eminent persons, is also in favour of this at Stratford: but we have a still better criterion, and a more

forcible argument in its behalf: one that "flashes conviction" to the eye of the intelligent artist and anatomist, This is the truth of drawing with the accuracy of muscular forms, and shape of the skull which distinguishes the bust now referred to, and which are evidences of a faithful sculptor. The head is cut out of a block of stone, and was formerly coloured in imitation of nature: but Mr. Malone prevailed on the respectable clergyman of Stratford, to have it re-painted all over with white-lead, &c. By this absurd and tasteless operation, the character and expression of the features are much injured. It was the practice of the time to paint busts to imitate nature; and had this been left in its original state and colour, some useful information would have been imparted. Provoked at this act of Malone, a visitor to Stratford Church left the following lines in a book kept near this tomb.

Stranger, to whom this monument is shown,
Invoke the Poet's curses on Malone;
Whose meddling zeal his barb'rous taste displays,
And *smears* his tomb-stone as he *marr'd* his plays.

Mr. Malone characterises the bust, for its "*pertness of countenance;* and therefore totally differing from that placid composure and thoughtful gravity, so perceptible in his *original portrait*, and his best prints. Our poet's monument, having been erected by his son-in-law, Dr. Hall, the statuary [sculptor] probably had the assistanee of some picture, and failed from want of skill to copy it." Thus prepossession and prejudice will always pervert facts, and resort to sophistry. In spite of all that has been advanced by Mr. Malone, by Jonson, and by other writers, in behalf of different pictures and prints professing to be likenesses of Shakspeare, they are to me unsatisfactory, and indeed futile: for a bad artist can never produce a good portrait, nor can we place any reliance on the execution of an unskilful engraver, or a worn-out picture. Whatever comes in "a questionable shape," should be severely and fastidiously investigated; if not authenticated by proof, or supported by

powerful probability, should be banished from the page of history, and from the receptacles of belief.

From what has already been stated, it is evident that the writings of Shakspeare have progressively acquired considerable publicity; and that they now rank as chief, or in the first list, of British classics. This high celebrity is to be attributed to various secondary causes, as well as to their own intrinsic merits. To players, critics, biographers, and artists, a large portion of this celebrity is to be ascribed; for had the plays been represented by Garrick, Kemble, &c. as originally published by Condell and Hemynge, or reprinted verbatim from that text, the spectators to the one, and the readers of the other, would have been comparatively limited. It is talent only that can properly represent and appreciate talent. The birth and productions of one man of brilliant genius will stimulate the emulation, and call into action the full powers of a correlative mind. Hence the British theatrical hemisphere has been repeatedly illumined by the corruscations of *Garrick*, *Henderson*, *Pritchard*, *Kemble*, *Siddons*, *Cooke*, *Young*, and *Kean:* and those performers have derived no small portion of their justly acquired fame, from the exquisite and powerful writings of the bard of Avon. Whilst the one may be considered as the creator of thought and inventor of character, the others have personified and given "local habitation" and existence to the poetical vision. The painter has also been usefully and honourably employed in delineating incidents, and portraying characters and scenes from the poet: whilst the engraver, by his attractive art, has given them extensive circulation and permanent record. It may thus be said that the works of Shakspeare have conferred a literary and dramatic immortality on Great Britain, which nothing less than annihilation can destroy.

Although the full contents of the cornucopia of panegyric have been poured out on the merits of Shakspeare;—although some writers have given an unbridled licence to their pens in praising his works; we

rarely find such encomiums extravagant; the language of flattery is simple approbation when thus applied; and I presume it has often occurred to others, as it has to myself, that no strains of praise ever have satisfied or ever will fully satisfy our own conception of his merits. We continually recur to his works with unceasing and renewed delight. We turn over his pages with confidence of finding novelties—beauties—bursts of intellect, to awaken and gratify the best propensities. Whether our purpose be to amuse the idle hour—to inform the understanding—to stimulate the senses to generous action—or to ardent enterprise: whether we seek to know the history of man as he has been, is, and ought to be, we shall be amply instructed by the profound writings of this unrivalled author. Justly might Milton exclaim, "Dear son of memory, great heir of fame!" for he must be inestimately dear to every human being who cherishes and appreciates memory; and he may with great propriety be pronounced the truly legitimate heir of fame.

"An overstrained enthusiasm," says Hazlitt, "is more pardonable, with respect to Shakspeare, than the want of it; for our admiration cannot easily surpass his genius." Again, Pope remarks, Shakspeare's "*characters* are so much nature herself, that it is a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture, like a mock rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakspeare is as much an individual, as those of life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably distinct." *Preface.*

Among the many wreaths that have been formed to decorate his brows, I believe there is no one more apposite and eloquent than the following, from that

genuine English poet, Dr. Wolcott, in his "Ode to my Candle."

Thus while I wond'ring pause o'er Shakspeare's page,
I mark in visions of delight the sage,
High o'er the wrecks of man, who stands sublime;
A column in the melancholy waste
(Its cities humbled and its glories past,)
Majestic mid the solitude of time.

Schlegel, a German author, in his eloquent and discriminating Lectures on the Drama, has some admirable and judicious remarks on Shakspeare and his plays. "Never," says he, as rendered into English, by Black, "perhaps was there so comprehensive a talent for characterization as Shakspeare. It not only grasps the diversities of rank, sex, and age, down to the dawnings of infancy; not only do the king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, the sage and the idiot speak and act with equal truth: not only does he transport himself to distant ages and foreign nations, and portray in the most accurate manner, with only a few apparent violations of costume, the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the French in their wars with the English, of the English themselves during a great part of their history, of the southern Europeans (in the serious part of many comedies), the cultivated society of that time, and the former rude and barbarous state of the north; his human characters have not only such depth and precision that they cannot be arranged under classes, and are inexhaustible, even in conception:—no, this Prometheus not merely forms men, he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits; calls up the midnight ghost; exhibits before us his witches amidst their unhallowed mysteries; peoples the air with sportive fairies and sylphs:—and these beings existing only in imagination, possess such truth and consistency, that even when deformed monsters like Caliban, he extorts the assenting conviction, if there should be such beings they would so conduct themselves. In a word, as he carries with him the most fruitful and daring fancy into the kingdom of nature—on the other hand, he carries

nature into the regions of fancy, lying beyond the confines of reality. We are lost in astonishment at seeing the extraordinary, the wonderful, and the unheard of, in such intimate nearness." Vol. II. 131.

"If Shakspeare deserves our admiration for his characters, he is equally deserving of it for the exhibition of passion, taking this word in its widest signification, as including every mental condition, every tone from indifference, or familiar mirth to the wildest rage and despair. He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of preceding conditions. His passions do not at first stand displayed to us in all their height, as is the case with so many tragic poets, who, in the language of Lessing, are thorough masters of the legal style of love. He paints in a most inimitable manner the gradual progress from the first origin. "He gives," as Lessing says, "a living picture of all the most minute and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls; of all the imperceptible advantages which it there gains; of all the stratagems by which every other passion is made subservient to it, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversions." Of all poets, perhaps, he alone has portrayed the mental diseases, melancholy, delirium, lunacy, with such inexpressible, and in every respect definite truth, that the physician may enrich his observations from them in the same manner as from real cases.

"And yet Johnson has objected to Shakspeare, that his pathos is not always natural and free from affectation. There are, it is true, passages, though, comparatively speaking, very few, where his poetry exceeds the bounds of true dialogue, where a too soaring imagination, a too luxuriant wit, rendered the complete dramatic forgetfulness of himself impossible. Hence an idea has been formed of simple and natural pathos, which consists in exclamations destitute of imagery, and no wise elevated above every-day life. But energetical passions electrify the whole of the mental powers, and will consequently, in highly favoured

natures, express themselves in an ingenious and figurative manner.

" Besides, the rights of the poetical form have not been duly weighed. Shakspeare, who was always sure of his object, to move in a sufficiently powerful manner when he wished to do so, has occasionally, by indulging in a freer play, purposely moderated the impressions when too painful, and immediately introduced a musical alleviation of our sympathy. He had not those rude ideas of his art which many moderns seem to have, as if the poet, like the clown in the proverb, must strike twice on the same place.

" The objection that Shakspeare wounds our feelings by the open display of the most disgusting moral odiousness, harrows up the mind unmercifully, and tortures even our senses by the exhibition of the most insupportable and hateful spectacles, is one of much greater importance. He has never, in fact, varnished over wild and blood-thirsty passions with a pleasing exterior; never clothed crime and want of principle with a false show of greatness of soul: and in that respect he is every way deserving of praise. Twice he has portrayed downright villains: and the masterly way in which he has contrived to elude impressions of too painful a nature, may be seen in Iago and Richard the Third. The constant reference to a petty and puny race must cripple the boldness of the poet. Fortunately for his art, Shakspeare lived in an age extremely susceptible of noble and tender impressions, but which had still enough of the firmness inherited from a vigorous old time, not to shrink back with dismay from every strong and violent picture.

" We have lived to see tragedies of which the catastrophe consists in the swoon of an enamoured princess. If Shakspeare falls occasionally into the opposite extreme, it is a noble error, originating in the fullness of a gigantic strength; and yet this tragical Titan, who storms the heavens, and threatens to tear the world from off its hinges; who, more terrible than Æschylus, makes our hair stand on end, and congeals our blood

with horror, possessed at the same time the insinuating loveliness of the sweetest poetry. He plays with love like a child; and his songs are breathed out like melting sighs. He unites in his genius the utmost elevation and the utmost depth; and the most foreign and even apparently irreconcileable properties subsist in him peaceably together. The world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures at his feet. In strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a protecting spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals, as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child.

"Shakspeare's comic talent is equally wonderful with that which he has shewn in the pathetic and tragic; it stands on an equal elevation, and possesses equal extent and profundity. All that I before wished was not to admit that the former preponderated. He is highly inventive in comic situations and motives. It will be hardly possible to show whence he has taken any of them: whereas in the serious part of his drama, he has generally laid hold of something already known. His comic characters are equally true, various, and profound with his serious. So little is he disposed to caricature that we may rather say many of his traits are almost too nice and delicate for the stage, that they can only be properly seized by a great actor, and fully understood by a very acute audience. Not only has he delineated many kinds of folly, he has also contrived to exhibit mere stupidity in a most diverting and entertaining manner." Vol. ii. p. 143.

It will be both useful and amusing to close this essay with an account of the principal editions of Shakspeare's plays and poems, and also with an enumeration of the most considerable volumes and pamphlets that have been expressly devoted to comment on, elucidate, or perplex his writings.

The first collection of Shakspeare's plays was published in 1623, with the following title: "Mr. William Shakspeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies.

Published according to the true original copies. London: printed by Isaac Jaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623." folio. This volume was edited by *John Hemynge* and *Henrie Condell*, and was dedicated to "the most incomparable pair of brethren" William, Earl of Pembroke, and Philip, Earl of Montgomery. In the title page is a portrait, said to be a likeness of the author, with the engraver's name, "Martin Droeshout, Sculpsit, London;" and on the opposite page are these lines by Ben. Jonson, addressed "To the Reader."

> "This figure that thou here see'st put,
> It was for gentle Shakspeare cut,
> Wherein the graver had a strife
> With nature to outdoo the life:
> O, could he but have drawne his wit
> As well in brasse, as he hath hit
> His face; the print would then surpasse
> All that was ever writ on brasse.
> But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
> Not on his Picture, but his Booke. B. J.

The above volume was reprinted in 1808, for Vernor and Hood, London; and much stress was laid on its being a rigid and faithful copy; but Professor Porson and Mr. Upcott, Librarians of the London Institution, having carefully collated the two, found three hundred and forty-seven literal mistakes. The corrected copy is in the valuable library of James Perry, Esq.

A *second* edition of Shakspeare's plays was published in folio, in 1632; a *third* in 1664, and a *fourth* in 1685. These several impressions are usually denominated "*ancient editions*," because published within the first century after the death of the poet, and before any comments or elucidations were employed to expound the original text.

Of the *editions*, which are distinguished by the title *modern*, the earliest was published by *Nicholas Rowe* in 1709, in 6 vols. 8vo. This was followed by an edition in 12mo. by the same editor in 1714; and to each was prefixed a biographical memoir of the illustrious bard. In 1725, *Pope*, who first introduced critical and emendatory notes, published his edition in 6

vols. 4to. with a preface, which Johnson characterizes as valuable alike for composition and justness of remark. A second edition by the same editor was published in 10 vols. 12mo. with additional notes and corrections, in 1728. The successor of Pope was *Theobald*, who produced a more elaborate edition in 7 vols. 8vo. in 1733; a second, with corrections and additions, in 8 vols. 12mo. in 1740; and another in 1773. Sir *Thomas Hanmer* next turned his attention to the illustration of Shakspeare, and in 1744 gave the world an edition of his plays in 6 vols. 4to. *Warburton* published an edition in 8 vols. 8vo. in 1747. The next commentator on Shakspeare, was the Colossus of Literature, *Dr. Johnson*, who was employed by the booksellers to edite a new edition of our bard's works, which appeared in 8 vols. 8vo. 1765. For his labour Johnson was paid 480*l.*; and besides some notes to each play, he wrote a general preface to the whole, which has been much extolled by some authors, but is thus very properly characterized by Hazlitt. Dr. Johnson's Preface "looks like a laborious attempt to bury the characteristic merits of his author under a load of cumbrous phraseology, and to weigh his excellences and defects in equal scales, stuffed full of 'swelling figures, and sonorous epithets.' Nor could it well be otherwise: Dr. Johnson's general powers of reasoning overlaid his critical susceptibility. All his ideas were cast in a given mould, in a set form; they were made out by rule and system, by climax, inference, and antitheses:—Shakspeare's were the reverse. Johnson's understanding dealt only in round numbers: the fractions were lost upon him. To him an excess of beauty was a fault; for it appeared to him like an excrescence; and his imagination was dazzled with the blaze of light. He was a man of strong common sense and practical wisdom, rather than of genius or feeling."

In 1766, *Steevens* published an edition of 20 plays, in 4 vols. 8vo. This was followed, in 1768, by a complete edition in 12 vols. crown 8vo. by Mr. *Capell;* which was succeeded by an edition in 10 vols. 8vo. in 1773, by *Johnson* and *Steevens*, conjointly. Of this last, a second

edition was published in 1778; a third, revised and corrected by *Isaac Reed*, in 1785. In the year following was produced the first volume of the dramatic works of Shakspeare, with notes, by the Rev. *Joseph Rann*, A. M. which work was completed in 6 vols. 8vo. 1794. In 1784, was published, in 1 vol. royal 8vo. an edition printed for Stockdale, with a very copious index of passages, by the Rev. Mr. *Ayscough*. *Bell*'s edition appeared in 1788, in 20 vols. 18mo.; and in 1790, *Malone*'s was ushered into the world, in 10 vols. crown 8vo. In 1793, a fourth edition, "revised and augmented," by Mr. *Steevens* himself, in 15 vols. 8vo. A fifth of the same was published in 1803. A sixth edition, with corrections, &c. appeared in 1813, in 21 volumes. The latter is generally called *Reed*'s *edition*, but Mr. *Wm. Harris*, the respectable and intelligent librarian of the Royal Institution, revised and corrected its sheets, and added some notes. [See advertisement, vol. i.]

To particularize all the different editions of Shakspeare's plays, would occupy a considerable space; and to do it correctly would be a task of difficulty. Besides a vast number produced by London printers, several have been published in Scotland, Ireland, also in America, &c. His writings have also been translated into different languages, and accompanied by comments. Latterly they have appeared in the German language by Schlegel, whose translation, according to Madame de Stael, procured for the author great reputation.

Many other impressions of our author's plays have been published by different booksellers, in different sizes, from folio to 32mo. and of various degrees of typographic merit. Most of them, however, are unauthenticated reprints*: but many of them have the popular attraction of embellishments. The most splendid of this class was published by *Boydell*, in 9 vols. folio, embellished with 100 engravings, executed by, and after artists of the first eminence.

* By this term I include all books which are reprinted without the corrections and revisal of an ostensible editor.

# ESSAYS AND DISSERTATIONS

ON THE

## *WRITINGS OF SHAKSPEARE.*

The number and variety of the Commentaries that have been successively published on the Writings of Shakspeare, almost exceed credibility; and after so much labour, learning, and investigation have been devoted to the subject, a stranger might reasonably conclude that all doubts would be removed; that all obscurities would be elucidated; and that a literary planet, accompanied by so many satellites, could never present a dark phase. It is to be regretted that many of the following Essays are unimportant and almost useless; but it is barely justice to proclaim that some of his critical annotators have displayed much research, learning and acuteness; and to such the philologist and poetical antiquary are much indebted. Among this class is the recent work by Dr. Drake, which embraces an ample, impartial, and generally discriminating review of every thing that has been advanced respecting the life and character of our poet; with much ingenious and learned criticism on the literature, manners, customs, and amusements of the age. But for the high price of this work, it is calculated to be as popular as it is interesting.

In the following list, the books are arranged in chronological order, according to the dates of their respective publications.

1. A short View of Tragedy; its original Excellency and Corruption; with some Reflections on Shakspeare and other Practitioners for the Stage. By Mr. Rymer, Servant to their Majesties. Small 8vo. 1693.

2. Some Reflections on Mr. Rymer's "Short View of Tragedy," and an Attempt at a Vindication of Shakspeare, in an Essay directed to John Dryden, Esq. by Charles Gildon. Only in Gildon's Miscellaneous Letters and Essays. Small 8vo. 1694.

3. Remarks on the Plays of Shakspeare. By C. Gildon, 8vo. Printed at the end of the seventh volume of Rowe's edition, 1710.

4. An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare with some Letters of Criticism, to the Spectator. By Mr. Dennis. 8vo. 1712.

5. Shakspeare Restored; or a Specimen of the many Errors, as well committed, as unamended, by Mr. Pope, in his late Edition of this Poet. Designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the true Reading of Shakspeare in all the Editions ever yet published. By Mr. Theobald. 4to. 1726.

6. An Answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, in a Letter to a Friend; being a Vindication of the old Actors

who were the Publishers and Performers of that Author's Plays. Whereby the Errors of their Editions are further accounted for, and some Memoirs of Shakspeare and the Stage History of his Time are inserted, which were never before collected and published. By a Strolling Player (John Roberts.) 8vo. 1729.

7. Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, written by William Shakspeare. Printed for Wilkins, London. 8vo. 1736.

8. Explanatory and Critical Notes on divers Passages of Shakspeare's Plays. By Francis Peck. Printed with his new Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. John Milton. 4to. 1740.

9. An Essay towards fixing the true Standards of Wit and Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule: to which is added, an Analysis of the Characters of a Humourist, Sir John Falstaff, Sir Roger de Coverley, and Don Quixotte. (By Corbyn Morris, Esq.) 8vo. 1744.

10. Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with Remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's Edition of Shakspeare. To which is affixed, Proposals for a new Edition of Shakspeare, with a Specimen. (By Dr. Samuel Johnson.) 12mo. 1745.

11. A Word or two of Advice to Wm. Warburton, a Dealer in many Words. By a Friend (Dr. Grey). With an Appendix, containing a Taste of William's Spirit of Railing. 8vo. 1746.

12. Critical Observations on Shakspeare. By John Upton, Preb. of Rochester. 1st ed. 8vo. 1746. 2d. ed. 1748.

13. An Inquiry into the Learning of Shakspeare; with Remarks on several Passages of his Plays. In a Conversation. By P. Whalley, A. B. 8vo. 1748.

14. An Answer to certain Passages in Mr. W——'s Preface, in his Edition of Shakspeare; together with some Remarks on the many Errors and false Criticisms in the Work itself. 8vo. 1748.

15. The Canons of Criticism and Glossary; being a Supplement to Mr. Warburton's Edition of Shakspeare. Collected from the Notes in that celebrated Work, and proper to be bound up with it. By the other Gentleman of Lincoln's-Inn (Mr. Edwards). 1st edition, 8vo. 1748; 7th edition, with additions, 8vo. 1765. Remarks on Shakspeare, by Mr. Roderick, are printed at the end of the last edition.

16. An Attempte to rescue that aunciente English Poet and Plawrighte Maister Williame Shakspeare, from the many errours faulsely charged on him by certaine new-fangled wittes, and to let him speak for himself, as right well he wotteth, when freede from the many careless mistakings of the heedless first imprinters of his Workes. By a Gentleman, formerly of Gray's

Inn (Mr. Holt). 8vo. 1749. [May 1, 1750, Mr. Holt issued Proposals to publish by Subscription, in 8vo. and 12mo. an Edition of Shakspeare's Plays.]

17. A free and familiar Letter to that great Refiner of Pope and Shakspeare, the Rev. Mr. Wm. Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's-Inn; with Remarks upon the Epistle of Friend A. E. In which his unhandsome Treatment of this celebrated Writer is exposed in the Manner it deserves. By a Country Curate (Dr. Grey). 8vo. 1750.

18. The Beauties of Shakspeare; regularly selected from each Play: with a general Index, digesting them under proper Heads. Illustrated with explanatory Notes, and similar Passages from ancient and modern Authors. By William Dodd, B. A. 2 vols. 12mo. 1st edition, 1752; 2d edition, 1757; 3d edition, 3 vols. 12mo. 1782.

19. Remarks upon a late Edition of Shakspeare; with a long String of Emendations, borrowed by the celebrated Editor from the Oxford Edition without Acknowledgment. To which is prefixed, a Defence of the late Sir Thomas Hanmer, Bart. addressed to the Rev. Mr. Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's-Inn, &c. 8vo. No Date.

20. Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: with a Preface, containing some general Remarks on the Writings of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1752.

21. Shakspeare Illustrated; or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakspeare are founded, collected and translated from the original Authors, with critical Remarks. By Mrs. Lennox. 2 vols. 12mo. 1753. A third Volume, with the same Title, was published in 1754.

22. Critical, historical, and explanatory Notes on Shakspeare: with Emendations of the Text and Metre. By Zachary Grey, LL. D. 2 vols. 8vo. 1755.

23. The celebrated Letter of Sir Thomas Hanmer, in the 6th vol. of Biographia Britannica, wherein is discovered the rise of the Bishop of Gloucester's quarrel with the Baronet, about his edition of Shakspeare's Plays; to which is added, an impartial Account of the extraordinary means used to suppress the remarkable Letter. By a Proprietor of that Work (Philip Nichols). 4to. 1763.

24. A Revisal of Shakspeare's Text, wherein the Alterations introduced into it by the more modern Editors and Critics are particularly considered. By Mr. Heath. 8vo. 1765.

25. A Review of Dr. Johnson's new Edition of Shakspeare, in which the Ignorance or Inattention of that Editor is exposed, and the Poet defended from the Persecution of his Commentators. By W. Kenrick. 8vo. 1765.

26. An Examination of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Mr. Johnson's Edition of Shakspeare. (By Mr. Barclay.) 8vo. 1766.

27. A Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare; containing a Number of curious and ludicrous Anecdotes of literary Biography. By a Friend (Wm. Kenrick.) 8vo. 1766.

28. Observations and Conjectures on some Passages of Shakspeare. By Thomas Tyrwhitt, Esq. 8vo. 1766.

29. An Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare. By the Rev. Dr. Richard Farmer. 8vo. 1767; 2d edition, crown 8vo. 1767. 3d edition, crown 8vo. 1789.

30. A Letter to David Garrick, Esq. concerning a Glossary to the Plays of Shakspeare, on a more extensive Plan than has hitherto appeared. To which is added, a Specimen. By Richard Warner, Esq. 8vo. 1768. pp. 110.

31. An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets; with some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Mons. de Voltaire. By Mrs. Montagu. 8vo. 1769, 2d edition, 1770; 6th edition, corrected, to which are added, Three Dialogues of the Dead, 8vo. 1810. Some large paper.

32. The Tragedy of King Lear as lately published, vindicated from the Abuse of the Critical Reviewers; and the wonderful genius and abilities of those Gentlemen, for criticism set forth, celebrated and extolled. By the Editor of King Lear. (Charles Jennins, Esq.) 8vo. 1772.

33. Cursory Remarks on Tragedy, on Shakspeare, and on certain French and Italian Poets, principally Tragedians. (By Edward Taylor, Esq.) Crown 8vo. 1774.

34. The Morality of Shakspeare's Drama illustrated. By Mrs. Griffiths. 8vo. 1775.

35. Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff. (By Mr. Maurice Morgan.) 8vo. 1777. pp. 185.

36. Discours sur Shakspeare, et sur M. de Voltaire, par Jos. Baretti. Lond. 8vo. 1777.

37. A Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays, published in 1778. Containing additional Observations by several of the former Commentators. To which are subjoined, the genuine Poems of the same Author, and seven Plays that have been ascribed to him; with Notes by the Editor (Mr. Malone) and others. 2 vols. 8vo. 1780.

38. Notes and various Readings of Shakspeare. By Edward Capell. 3 vols. 4to. 1781.

39. Remarks, critical and illustrative, on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare (Steevens, 1778). By Joseph Ritson. 8vo. 1783.

40. A familiar Address to the curious in English Poetry, more particularly to the Readers of Shakspeare. By Thersitus Literarius. 8vo. 1784. This Pamphlet contains Strictures on Ritson's "Remarks," and according to the Monthly Review, (Vol. LXXI. p. 151.) "is written with urbanity and good manners."

41. Dramatic Miscellanies; consisting of critical Observations on the Plays of Shakspeare, &c. By Thomas Davies. 3 vols. Crown 8vo. 1784.

42. Comments on the last Edition of Shakspeare's Plays. By John Monck Mason, Esq. 8vo. 1785.

43. Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare. (By Thos. Whateley.) 8vo. 1785. 2d Edition. Crown 8vo. Oxford. 1808.

44. Macbeth Re-considered: an Essay intended as an Answer to Part of the Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare. By J. P. Kemble. 8vo. 1786.

45. Imperfect Hints towards a new Edition of Shakspeare, written chiefly in the Year 1782. 4to. 1787.

46. The same. Part the Second, and last. 4to. 1788. (By Sam. Felton.)

47. A Concordance to Shakspeare: suited to all the Editions in which the distinguished and parallel Passages in the Plays of that justly admired Writer are methodically arranged. To which are added, Three Hundred Notes and Illustrations entirely new. (By A. Becket). 8vo. 1787.

48. The Quip Modest; a few Words by way of Supplement, to Remarks, Critical and Illustrative, on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare, occasioned by a republication of that edition; revised and augmented by the Editor of Dodsley's Old Plays: motto—"We'll sift this matter further." 8vo. 1788. (By Jos. Ritson.) [See 39.]

49. An Authentic Account of the Shaksperian Manuscripts, &c. By W. H. Ireland. 8vo. 1791.

50. Cursory Criticisms on the Edition of Shakspeare, published by Edmund Malone. By Joseph Ritson. 8vo. 1792.

51. A Letter to the Rev. Richard Farmer, D. D. relative to the Edition of Shakspeare published in 1790, and some late Criticisms on that Work. By Edmund Malone, Esq. 8vo. 1792.

52. Cursory Remarks upon the Arrangement of the Plays of Shakspeare, occasioned by reading Mr. Malone's Essay on the Chronological Order of those celebrated Pieces. By the Rev J. Hurdis, M. A. 8vo. 1792.

53. Letter to the Rev. Richard Farmer, D. D. relative to the Edition of Shakspeare, published in 1790, and some late Criticisms on that Work. By Edmund Malone, Esq. 8vo. 1792.

54. A second Appendix to Mr. Malone's Supplement to the last Edition of the Plays of Shakspeare; containing additional Observations by the Editor of the Supplement. 8vo. 1793. (Only 50 copies printed).

55. Shakspeare Illustrated, by an assemblage of Portraits and Views, engraved by Harding, &c. 2 vols. 4to. and imp. 8vo. 1793.

56. Twenty large Prints to Shakspeare, from Designs by Bunbury, engraved by Bartolozzi, &c. Published at 21l.

57. Specimen of a Commentary on Shakspeare; containing, 1. Notes on As You Like It; 2. An Attempt to explain and illustrate various Passages on a new Principle of Criticism, derived from Mr. Locke's Doctrine of the Association of Ideas. By the Rev. Walter Whiter. 8vo. 1794.

58. The Story of the Moor of Venice. Translated from the Italian. With Two Essays on Shakspeare, and Preliminary Observations. By Wolstenholme Parr, A. M. late Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. 1795.

59. An Inquiry into the Authenticity of certain Miscellaneous Papers, published, Dec. 24, 1795, and attributed to Shakspeare, Queen Elizabeth, and Henry Earl of Southampton: illustrated by Fac-similes of the genuine Hand-writing of that Nobleman and of her Majesty; a new Fac-simile of the Hand-writing of Shakspeare, never before exhibited; and other authentic Documents. By Edmund Malone, Esq. 8vo. 1796. London.

60. A Letter to George Steevens, Esq. containing a Critical Examination of the Papers of Shakspeare, published by Mr. Samuel Ireland; to which are added, Extracts from Vortigern. By James Boaden, Esq. author of Fontainville Forest, &c. 8vo. 1796.

61. Shakspeare's Manuscripts, in the possession of Mr. Ireland, examined respecting the Internal and External Evidences of their Authenticity. By Philalethes (Mr. Webb). 8vo. 1796.

62. Free Reflections on Miscellaneous Papers and Instruments, under the hand and seal of Shakspeare, in the possession of Samuel Ireland, of Norfolk-street; to which are added, Extracts from an unpublished Play, called the Virgin Queen, written by, or in imitation of, Shakspeare. By Francis Godolphin Waldron. London. 8vo. 1796.

63. A Comparative Review of the Opinions of Mr. James Boaden, (Editor of the Oracle), in February, March, and April 1795, and of James Boaden, Esq. (Author of Fontainville Forest, and of a Letter to George Steevens, Esq.) in February, 1796, relative to the Shakspeare MSS. By a Friend to Consistency. 8vo. 1796.

64. Vortigern under consideration, with general Remarks on Mr. James Boaden's Letter to George Steevens, Esq. relative to the Manuscripts, Drawings, Seals, &c. ascribed to Shakspeare, and in possession of S. Ireland, Esq. 8vo. 1796.

65. An Investigation of Mr. Malone's claim to the Character of Scholar or Critic; being an Examination of his "Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Shakspeare MSS. &c." By Samuel Ireland. London. 8vo. No date, pp. 154. (1797.)

66. An Appendix to Observations on Hamlet; being an attempt to prove that Shakspeare designed that Tragedy as an indirect censure on Mary Queen of Scots. Containing, I. some Observations on Dramas which professedly allude to the Occurrences and Characters of the Times in which they were written, and an Answer to the Objections brought against the Hypothesis. II. Some farther Arguments in support of it: and III. an Answer brought against Dr. Warburton's Hypothesis respecting an allusion to Mary, Queen of Scots, in the celebrated Passage in the Midsummer-Night's Dream. By James Plumptre, M. A. 8vo. 1797.

67. An Apology for the Believers in the Shakespeare-papers, which were exhibited in Norfolk Street, London. By George Chalmers. 8vo. 1797.

68. Remarks on Shakspeare's Tempest: containing an Investigation of Mr. Malone's Attempt to ascertain the Date of that Play, and various Notes and Illustrations of abstruse Readings and Passages. By Charles Dirrill, Esq. (Richard Sill). 8vo. 1797.

69. Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: with an Appendix, containing some further Observations on Shakspeare, extended to the late Edition of Malone and Steevens. By the Right Hon. J. Monck Mason. 8vo. 1798.

70. Mr. Ireland's Vindication of his Conduct respecting the publication of the supposed Shakspeare MSS.; being a Preface or Introduction to a Reply to the Critical Labours of Mr. Malone, in his Enquiry into the Authenticity of certain Papers, &c. Lond. 8vo. 1799, pp. 48.

71. A Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-papers: being a Reply to Mr. Malone's Answer, which was early announced, but never published; with a Dedication to George Steevens, F. R. S. S. A. and a Postscript to T. J. Mathias, F. R. S. S. A. the Author of the Pursuits of Literature. By George Chalmers, F.R.S. S.A. 8vo. 1799. [See No. 69.]

72. An Attempt to Illustrate a few Passages in Shakspeare's Works. By J. T. Finegan. 8vo. Bath. 1802.

73. The Shaksperian Miscellany. By F. G. Waldron. 4to. 1802.

74. Notes upon some of the obscure Passages in Shakspeare's Plays, with Remarks upon the Explanations and Amendments of the Commentators in the Editions of 1785, 1790, 1793, by Lord Chedworth. 8vo. 1805, (*privately printed.*)

75. Remarks, critical, conjectural, and explanatory, upon the Plays of Shakspeare; resulting from a Collation of the early Copies with that of Johnson and Steevens, edited by Isaac

Reed, Esq. Together with some valuable Extracts from the Manuscripts of the late Right Hon. John Lord Chedworth. By E. H. Seymour. 2 vols. royal 8vo. 1805.

76. A complete Verbal Index to the Plays of Shakspeare; adapted to all the Editions. Comprehending every Substantive, Adjective, Verb, Participle, and Adverb used by Shakspeare; with a distinct reference to every individual passage in which each word occurs. By Francis Twiss, Esq. 2 vols. 8vo. 1805.

The greater part of this work having been destroyed by fire, renders the remaining copies scarce, and high in price.

77. Comments on the Commentators of Shakspeare, with preliminary Observations on his Genius and Writings, and on the Labours of those who have endeavoured to elucidate them. By Henry James Pye, London. 8vo. 1807.

78. Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of ancient Manners; with Dissertations on the Clowns and Fools of Shakspeare; on the Collection of popular Tales, entitled Gesta Romanorum; and on the English Morris Dance. By Francis Douce. 2 vols. 8vo. with numerous Engravings, mostly in Wood. Price 1*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* London. 1807.

79. An Account of the Incidents from which the Title and Part of the Story of Shakspeare's Tempest were derived, and its true Date ascertained. By Edmund Malone. London. 1808. This pamphlet was not published; only eighty copies of it were printed and distributed by the Author.

80. An Examination of the Charges maintained by Messrs. Malone, Chalmers, and others, of Ben. Jonson's Enmity, &c. towards Shakspeare. By O. Gilchrist. 8vo. 1808. pp. 62, 2s. 6d.

81. Annotations on Plays of Shakspeare (Johnson and Steevens's Edition), dedicated to the Society of Antiquaries. By John Croft. York. 8vo. 1810, pp. 24. (Written by Dr. Hunter.)

82. Essays on Shakspeare's Dramatic Characters; with an Illustration of Shakspeare's Representation of National Characters, in that of Fluellen. The Sixth Edition. By William Richardson, M. A. F. R. S. E. Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow. London. 1812. 8vo. The above Essays were published at different times. The first portion appeared in 1774, under the title of "A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakspeare's Dramatic Characters." In 1784 were published "Essays on Shakspeare's Dramatic Characters of Richard the Third, King Lear, and Timon of Athens. To which were now added, "An Essay on the Faults of Shakspeare, and additional Observations on the Character of Hamlet." Soon after were published, "Essays on Shakspeare's Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff; and on his Imitation of Female Characters." To which were subjoined, "Observations on the chief Objects of Criticism in the Works of Shakspeare." These various Performances were originally collected

into one volume, with one uniform title, in 1797. The Essay on the Representation of National Characters illustrated in that of Fluellen, with two original Letters from the late Edmund Burke, Esq. were added to the edition 1812.

83. Aphorisms from Shakspeare, arranged according to the Plays, &c.; with a Preface and Notes; numeral references to each Subject, and a copious Index. By Capel Lofft. Bury, printed 1812, 8vo. preface xxxv. 456, index xxxvi. 7s. Bds.

84. An Essay on the Character of Henry the Fifth when Prince of Wales. By Alexander Luders, Esq. 8vo. 1813. This ingenious little volume is written to show, that the Prince was not that "wanton and dissolute character assigned to him in the plays of Shakspeare, and that older play which he seems to have followed."

85. In Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," translated by J. Black. 2 vols. 8vo. 1815, are some judicious and discriminating Criticisms on the Writings and Merits of Shakspeare. Hazlitt observes, that "they give by far the best account of the plays of Shakspeare, that has hitherto appeared."

86. Shakspeare's Himself Again; or the Language of the Poet asserted: being a full, but dispassionate Examen of the Readings and Interpretations of the several Editors. The Whole comprised in a Series of Notes, Sixteen Hundred in Number; and further illustrative of the more difficult Passages in his Plays: to the various Editions of which, the present Volumes form a *complete and necessary Supplement*. By Andrew Becket. 2 vols. 8vo. 1815. Price 1*l*. Boards. See Quarterly Review, No 31.

87. Remarks on the Monumental Bust of Shakspeare, at Stratford-upon-Avon, with two Wood Cuts, representing Front and Profile Views of the Bust. By J. Britton, F.S.A. to accompany a Portrait of the Bard, engraved by W. Ward, A.R.A. from a Picture by T. Phillips, Esq. R.A. 1816.

88. Characters of Shakespeare's Plays. By William Hazlitt. 8vo. 1817, pp. 352, price 10s. 6d. This volume contains much eloquent and original criticism. It embraces critical and analytical disquisitions, or "characters," as the author says, on thirty-two of Shakspeare's plays, also remarks on the "doubtful plays," and on the Poems and Sonnets.

89. Shakspeare and his Times; including the Biography of the Poet: Criticisms on his Genius and Writings; a Disquisition on the Object of his Sonnets; a new Chronology of his Plays; and a History of the Manners, Customs, and Amusements, Superstitions, Poetry, and elegant Literature of his Age. By Nathan Drake, M.D. 2 vols. 4to. 1818. 5 guineas: large paper 7 guineas. With a Portrait of Shakspeare, engraved after a Cast from the Monumental Bust at Stratford.

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